



THE MUN FACTORY

[T M F]

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

[D I S E C]

DELEGATE GUIDE

A G E N D A

Deliberation on the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and their Impact on International Peace and Security, with Special Emphasis on Strengthening the Global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime, Preventing Nuclear Escalation, and Promoting Multilateral Disarmament Efforts.

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1. About DISEC

1.1. History and Origins

The Disarmament and International Security Committee, commonly known as the First Committee or DISEC, is one of the six Main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly. Established in 1945 alongside the UN Charter, DISEC was created to address the global challenges of armament, military conflict, and international security. Its founding was a direct response to the devastation of the Second World War and the dawn of the nuclear age, which fundamentally altered the calculus of international relations.

Over the decades, DISEC has evolved from a Cold War-era forum focused primarily on the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union into a comprehensive platform addressing a broad spectrum of security issues, including conventional weapons, emerging technologies in warfare, and the intersection of cybersecurity with international stability.

1.2. Mandate and Scope

The mandate of DISEC encompasses all matters relating to international security and the regulation and reduction of armaments. Unlike the Security Council, which has binding enforcement powers, DISEC operates as a deliberative body that formulates recommendations, adopts resolutions, and promotes international cooperation on disarmament and security issues. Its decisions, while not legally binding, carry significant moral and political weight within the international community.

The committee's scope of work includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

Area	Description
Nuclear weapons	Non-proliferation, disarmament, testing bans, and nuclear risk reduction
Chemical weapons	Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and related norms
Biological weapons	Compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention and biosecurity
Conventional arms	Arms trade regulation, small arms proliferation, and ammunition management
Space security	Prevention of an arms race in outer space and responsible use of space
Cyber security	Norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace
Weapons of mass destruction	Cross-cutting issues related to WMD proliferation
Emerging technologies	AI, autonomous weapons, hypersonic systems, and their security implications

1.3. Functions and Powers

DISEC exercises its mandate through several key functions. The committee convenes annually during the regular session of the UN General Assembly, typically from October to November, where it deliberates on agenda items and adopts resolutions by majority vote. These resolutions, while not legally



binding, serve as important expressions of international consensus and can influence subsequent treaty negotiations, Security Council actions, and bilateral agreements.

The committee's powers include the ability to make recommendations to the General Assembly, draft resolutions on disarmament and security matters, facilitate international cooperation through confidence-building measures, and refer matters to other UN bodies for further action. DISEC also maintains subsidiary bodies, including the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, which operate as forums for more detailed negotiation on specific topics.

1.4. Voting Procedure

DISEC follows the standard UN General Assembly voting procedures. Resolutions are adopted by a simple majority of those present and voting. Each member state has one vote. Abstentions do not count towards the majority. In practice, many resolutions are adopted by consensus or near-unanimity, particularly those dealing with well-established norms such as nuclear non-proliferation.

2. Introduction to the Agenda

2.1. Why Nuclear Weapons Remain the Biggest Security Concern

Nuclear weapons are, by any measure, the most destructive instruments ever created by humanity. Since the first detonation in 1945, they have cast a long shadow over international relations, shaping strategic doctrines, alliance structures, and the very architecture of global security. Despite decades of arms control efforts, the world today possesses approximately **12,000 nuclear warheads** distributed among **nine nuclear-armed states**. The vast majority of these warheads – roughly 11,000 – are held by the United States and Russia.

The significance of this agenda lies not merely in the existence of nuclear weapons, but in the confluence of several worrying trends: a renewed nuclear arms race involving modernization of arsenals and development of new delivery systems; the erosion of arms control treaties that once provided stability; rising geopolitical tensions among major powers; the proliferation risks posed by regional conflicts and non-state actors; and the potential for accidental or unauthorized use through technological failure, miscommunication, or deliberate escalation.

2.2. Key Statistics

Indicator	Value
Nuclear-armed states	9
Estimated global warheads	12,000
Warheads held by USA and Russia	10,800 (90%)
Warheads on high alert	1,500–2,000
Countries in NATO nuclear sharing	5
NPT signatory states	191
Non-NPT nuclear-armed states	3 (India, Pakistan, Israel)
Countries in nuclear weapon-free zones	115+
IAEA member states	176

2.3. The Threat Landscape

The current threat landscape is multifaceted. A renewed **arms race** is evident in the modernization programmes of all nuclear-armed states, with investments in hypersonic delivery vehicles, low-yield warheads, and advanced missile defences. **Nuclear deterrence** doctrines, while credited with preventing nuclear war since 1945, are increasingly strained by the introduction of new technologies and the blurring of conventional and nuclear thresholds. The **risk of accidental war** remains a constant concern, with multiple close calls documented throughout history, and new risks emerging from cyber vulnerabilities in command-and-control systems and the deployment of artificial intelligence in early warning systems.

3. Historical Background

The history of nuclear weapons is inseparable from the history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What began as a scientific breakthrough during wartime quickly became the defining feature of international security architecture.

3.1. The Dawn of the Nuclear Age (1945–1960)

The nuclear age began with the Manhattan Project, the Allied effort to develop atomic weapons during the Second World War. On 6 and 9 August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing approximately 200,000 people and effectively ending the war in the Pacific. These remain the only uses of nuclear weapons in armed conflict. The Soviet Union tested its first nuclear device in 1949, inaugurating the Cold War nuclear arms race. The United Kingdom followed with its first test in 1952, establishing a triad of Western nuclear powers.

3.2. The Proliferation Era (1960–1980)

France became the fourth nuclear-armed state in 1960, and China joined in 1964. The growing number of nuclear states and the escalating arms race between the superpowers prompted international action. The **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**, opened for signature in 1968, was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while allowing the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)** agreement, the first major bilateral arms control treaty. India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, describing it as a “peaceful nuclear explosion,” raising serious proliferation concerns.

3.3. The Arms Control Era (1980–2000)

The 1980s saw significant progress in arms control. The **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty** of 1987 eliminated an entire class of nuclear missiles. The end of the Cold War brought the **Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)** in 1991, which mandated deep reductions in strategic nuclear forces. In 1996, the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** was adopted, prohibiting all nuclear explosive testing. However, the CTBT has not entered into force, as it requires ratification by specific states including the United States, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Iran, Egypt, and North Korea.

3.4. Contemporary Challenges (2000–Present)

The twenty-first century has witnessed a deterioration of the arms control architecture. North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003 and conducted its first nuclear test in 2006. The United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 and the INF Treaty in 2019. Russia suspended its participation in New START in 2023. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has featured repeated nuclear threats since 2022, raising the spectre of nuclear escalation in a major conventional war. Rising tensions between the United States and China, North Korea’s ongoing missile tests, and Iran’s nuclear programme continue to challenge the non-proliferation regime.

Year	Event
1945	Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings



1949	Soviet Union conducts first nuclear test
1952	United Kingdom conducts first nuclear test
1960	France conducts first nuclear test
1964	China conducts first nuclear test
1968	NPT opened for signature
1972	SALT I signed
1974	India conducts “Smiling Buddha” test
1987	INF Treaty signed
1991	START I signed
1996	CTBT adopted by UNGA
1998	India and Pakistan conduct nuclear tests
2003	North Korea withdraws from NPT
2006	North Korea conducts first nuclear test
2017	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted
2019	US withdraws from INF Treaty
2022–Present	Russia-Ukraine conflict; nuclear threats; DPRK missile tests

4. Understanding Nuclear Weapons

4.1. Types of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons derive their destructive energy from nuclear reactions – either fission or fusion. **Nuclear fission** weapons, commonly called atomic bombs, work by splitting heavy atomic nuclei such as uranium-235 or plutonium-239. The energy released is immense; the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, “Little Boy,” had a yield of approximately 15 kilotons (15,000 tons of TNT equivalent).

Nuclear fusion weapons, or thermonuclear weapons (hydrogen bombs), use a fission explosion to trigger a fusion reaction in isotopes of hydrogen (deuterium and tritium). Thermonuclear weapons are far more powerful than fission weapons. The largest nuclear weapon ever tested was the Soviet Union’s Tsar Bomba in 1961, with a yield of 50 megatons – over 3,000 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. Modern nuclear arsenals primarily consist of thermonuclear warheads with yields ranging from a fraction of a kiloton to several megatons.

4.2. Delivery Systems

The effectiveness of a nuclear weapon depends not only on its yield but on its ability to reach a target. Delivery systems have evolved dramatically since the early days of bomber-based delivery.

System	Description	Range	Key Operators
Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)	Long-range ballistic missile	5,500+ km	USA, Russia, China, India, others
Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)	Ballistic missile launched from nuclear submarine	7,000–12,000 km	USA, Russia, UK, France, China, India
Strategic Bomber	Long-range aircraft capable of carrying nuclear weapons	12,000+ km	USA, Russia, China
Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV)	Maneuverable hypersonic weapon	Variable	Russia, China, developing
Cruise Missile	Low-flying guided missile	250–2,500 km	Multiple states
Tactical Nuclear Artillery	Short-range nuclear shells and rockets	Up to 300 km	Russia (historically), developing

4.3. Strategic vs. Tactical Weapons

Strategic nuclear weapons are designed to strike targets deep within an adversary’s territory, including cities, industrial centres, military installations, and command-and-control facilities. They are typically high-yield (hundreds of kilotons to megatons) and delivered by ICBMs, SLBMs, or strategic bombers. These weapons form the backbone of nuclear deterrence doctrine.

Tactical (or non-strategic) nuclear weapons are designed for use on the battlefield or against military targets in a theatre of operations. They have lower yields (from less than one kiloton to several tens of kilotons) and include artillery shells, short-range missiles, torpedoes, and land mines. The distinction between strategic and tactical weapons has blurred in recent years, particularly with the development of low-yield strategic warheads.

4.4. Nuclear Doctrine

Each nuclear-armed state has developed a distinct nuclear doctrine – a set of principles governing the circumstances under which nuclear weapons would be used. Key concepts include:

Doctrine	Description	Primary Adopters
No First Use (NFU)	Pledge never to use nuclear weapons first	China, India
First Use / First Strike	Reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first	USA, Russia, France, UK
Massive Retaliation	Response to any attack with overwhelming nuclear force	Historical (1950s USA)
Flexible Response	Range of options from conventional to nuclear	NATO doctrine
Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)	Deterrence through the certainty of mutual annihilation	USA–Russia relationship
Minimum Deterrence	Maintain the smallest arsenal sufficient for deterrence	India, China (partially)
Deterrence by Denial	Defeat adversary attack through defence and conventional superiority	Some NATO states

5. Current Global Nuclear Landscape

The global nuclear landscape in 2026 is shaped by the arsenals, doctrines, and policies of nine nuclear-armed states. Each state presents a distinct set of challenges for the international non-proliferation regime.

5.1. United States

The United States possesses approximately **5,244 nuclear warheads** (total inventory, including deployed, stored, and retired). It is modernizing its entire nuclear triad, including the B-21 Raider bomber, the Columbia-class submarine, and the Sentinel ICBM. The US maintains a policy of “first use” and has recently developed low-yield warheads (the W76-2) to provide more “usable” nuclear options. It also maintains nuclear sharing arrangements with NATO allies.

5.2. Russia

Russia possesses the world’s largest nuclear arsenal, estimated at approximately **5,580 warheads**. It is actively modernizing its arsenal with novel systems such as the Sarmat ICBM, the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, and the Poseidon nuclear-powered autonomous torpedo. Russia has suspended participation in New START and has issued repeated nuclear threats during the Ukraine conflict. Its doctrine explicitly allows the use of nuclear weapons in response to threats to the state’s existence.

5.3. China

China maintains approximately **500 warheads** and is rapidly expanding its arsenal, with projections suggesting it could reach 1,000 or more by 2030. China maintains a declared No First Use policy, though some analysts question its credibility given China’s growing arsenal and the development of low-yield weapons. China is building over 300 new missile silos across three facilities, indicating a shift toward a more survivable and potentially more aggressive nuclear posture.

5.4. France

France possesses approximately **290 warheads** and maintains a doctrine of “strict sufficiency” – possessing the minimum necessary for deterrence. It is the only EU member state with nuclear weapons and has historically positioned itself as a European deterrent. France has conducted submarine and air-based tests but not land-based ICBM tests in recent decades.

5.5. United Kingdom

The UK maintains approximately **225 warheads**, deployed exclusively on Trident II D5 submarine-launched ballistic missiles aboard four Vanguard-class submarines. The UK is modernizing its fleet with the Dreadnought-class submarine programme. Its nuclear policy is integrated with NATO strategy, and it has not conducted an independent nuclear test since 1991.

5.6. India

India possesses an estimated **164 warheads** and follows a declared No First Use policy with a “massive retaliation” doctrine – any nuclear attack on India would be met with a response designed to inflict unacceptable damage. India’s arsenal includes the Agni series of ballistic missiles, the K-family of

SLBMs, and the nuclear triad is operational. India has not signed the NPT and remains outside the international non-proliferation regime.

5.7. Pakistan

Pakistan possesses an estimated **170 warheads** and does not have a declared No First Use policy. Pakistan's doctrine is primarily India-centric, with a focus on battlefield nuclear weapons to offset India's conventional military superiority. The development of the Nasr (Hatf-IX) tactical nuclear weapon system has lowered the nuclear threshold in South Asia. Pakistan's security and nuclear command-and-control are ongoing concerns for the international community.

5.8. North Korea

North Korea possesses an estimated **30–50 warheads** and has conducted six nuclear tests since 2006. It has developed an expanding range of ballistic missiles, including the Hwasong-18 solid-fuel ICBM and the Hwasong-17, which may have intercontinental range. North Korea has declared itself a "law-abiding nuclear weapons state" and has codified its nuclear status in domestic legislation. Its nuclear programme remains the most acute proliferation challenge.

5.9. Israel

Israel maintains a policy of **nuclear ambiguity** – neither confirming nor denying the possession of nuclear weapons. It is widely estimated to possess **80–90 warheads**, delivered by aircraft, ballistic missiles (the Jericho series), and potentially submarines. Israel has not signed the NPT and is not subject to IAEA safeguards. Its declared policy is one of deterrence and, if necessary, retaliation.

6. Major Stakeholders

The issue of nuclear proliferation involves a complex web of actors, each with distinct interests, capabilities, and roles in the international security architecture.

Stakeholder	Role	Key Interests
United Nations	Global governance framework; General Assembly resolutions	Peace and security; multilateralism
UN Security Council	Binding resolutions on proliferation threats	Enforcement; sanctions; conflict resolution
IAEA	Verification, safeguards, and nuclear energy promotion	Non-proliferation verification; peaceful nuclear use
NPT States Parties	191 states bound by the NPT framework	Compliance; treaty integrity; disarmament
Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)	Five NPT-recognised NWS (USA, Russia, China, France, UK)	Arsenal maintenance; deterrence; strategic stability
Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS)	Majority of UN membership	Security assurances; disarmament progress; peaceful nuclear rights
NATO	Military alliance with nuclear sharing arrangements	Extended deterrence; collective security
European Union	Political and economic bloc; supports non-proliferation	Normative influence; TPNW debate
African Union	Continental organisation; NWFZ advocate	African Pelindaba Treaty; development
ASEAN	Southeast Asian regional organisation	SEANWFZ; regional security
ICAN	Nobel Peace Prize 2017; TPNW advocate	Treaty advocacy; humanitarian impact
Civil Society / NGOs	Research, advocacy, monitoring	Transparency; accountability; norm-building
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists	Doomsday Clock; scientific advocacy	Risk assessment; public awareness
SIPRI	Independent research; arms control data	Data; analysis; policy recommendations

7. International Legal Framework

The international legal framework governing nuclear weapons comprises treaties, resolutions, and customary norms that have evolved over eight decades. Understanding this framework is essential for any delegate seeking to propose meaningful solutions.

7.1. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. It is built upon three pillars:

Non-proliferation: Nuclear-weapon states agree not to transfer nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states, and non-nuclear states agree not to acquire them.

Peaceful use: All parties have the inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, subject to IAEA safeguards.

Disarmament: All parties commit to pursuing negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament.

The NPT has been remarkably successful in limiting proliferation – only four states have acquired nuclear weapons after the NPT's entry into force (India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea), and three of these are not NPT parties. However, the disarmament pillar has been a source of persistent tension, as non-nuclear states argue that nuclear-armed states have not fulfilled their disarmament obligations.

7.2. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Adopted by the UNGA in 1996, the CTBT prohibits all nuclear explosive testing. While a de facto global moratorium on testing has been in place since 1998 (with the exception of North Korea), the CTBT has not entered into force because it requires ratification by 44 specific states listed in Annex 2 of the treaty. Eight of these states have not yet ratified: the United States, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea.

7.3. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Adopted in 2017 and entering into force in 2021, the TPNW comprehensively prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons. However, none of the nine nuclear-armed states have signed or ratified the TPNW, and many NATO members have opposed it, arguing it is incompatible with extended nuclear deterrence.

7.4. New START

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, signed in 2010 by the United States and Russia, limits each side to 1,550 deployed strategic warheads and 700 deployed delivery vehicles. Russia suspended its participation in 2023, and the treaty is set to expire in 2026 with no successor agreement in sight. New START represents the last remaining major bilateral arms control treaty between the world's two largest nuclear powers.

7.5. IAEA Safeguards

The International Atomic Energy Agency administers a system of safeguards designed to verify that states comply with their non-proliferation commitments. Safeguards include inspections, monitoring, and verification activities at nuclear facilities. The Additional Protocol, an optional supplement to safeguards agreements, provides the IAEA with expanded access and information. Comprehensive safeguards are mandatory for all NPT non-nuclear states.

7.6. UNSC Resolution 1540

Adopted in 2004 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, Resolution 1540 requires all states to establish and enforce laws prohibiting non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. It established a committee to monitor implementation and report on state compliance.

8. Previous UN Actions

The United Nations has been at the centre of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts since its founding. Several landmark actions and resolutions are particularly relevant to this committee's deliberations.

8.1. UNGA Resolutions on Nuclear Disarmament

The General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions on nuclear disarmament, including the annual resolution on “Nuclear Disarmament” (most recently A/RES/78/42), which urges nuclear-armed states to reduce their arsenals and pursue good-faith negotiations. The Assembly also adopted a resolution in 2018 establishing a High-Level International Commission on Nuclear Disarmament.

8.2. UNSC Resolutions on Proliferation

The Security Council has addressed specific proliferation threats through binding resolutions. **Resolution 1887 (2009)** called for a world without nuclear weapons and urged all states to comply with their non-proliferation obligations. **Resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), and 2397 (2017)** imposed progressively stricter sanctions on North Korea in response to its nuclear and missile tests.

8.3. NPT Review Conferences

The NPT is subject to a five-year review process. Review Conferences have been held in 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2022. The **1995 Review Conference** was particularly significant, as it resulted in the indefinite extension of the NPT and the adoption of 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament. The **2010 Review Conference** adopted a 64-point action plan, while the **2022 Review Conference** failed to adopt a substantive outcome document due to Russian opposition.

8.4. IAEA Conferences

The IAEA holds regular General Conferences and has convened special conferences on nuclear security. The **Nuclear Security Summits** (2010–2016), convened by the United States, brought together 52 nations to address the threat of nuclear terrorism and secure vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide.

9. Major Challenges

The path to a world free of nuclear weapons – or even a more stable nuclear order – faces numerous obstacles. Delegates should be prepared to address the following challenges in committee.

9.1. Nuclear Modernization

All nuclear-armed states are investing heavily in modernizing their arsenals. The United States has a nuclear modernization programme estimated at over 1.5 trillion US dollars over 30 years. Russia is developing novel delivery systems including hypersonic glide vehicles and nuclear-powered cruise missiles. China is expanding and modernizing its arsenal at an unprecedented pace. This modernization is often justified as necessary for maintaining credible deterrence, but critics argue it fuels a new arms race and undermines disarmament efforts.

9.2. Hypersonic Missiles

Hypersonic weapons – capable of manoeuvring at speeds above Mach 5 – challenge existing missile defence systems and reduce warning times for decision-makers. Russia's Avangard, China's DF-ZF, and the US's AGM-183A represent the vanguard of this technology. The reduced warning time increases the risk of miscalculation and accidental escalation, as leaders may feel pressured to make rapid decisions under conditions of extreme uncertainty.

9.3. AI and Autonomous Systems

The integration of artificial intelligence into nuclear command-and-control systems presents novel risks. AI-enhanced early warning systems may produce false alerts, and the deployment of autonomous systems in proximity to nuclear forces could create dangerous escalation dynamics. The development of AI-powered cyber capabilities that could target nuclear infrastructure adds another layer of risk.

9.4. Cyber Attacks on Nuclear Facilities

Cyber attacks on nuclear facilities – whether targeting command-and-control systems, early warning networks, or nuclear weapons themselves – represent a significant and growing threat. Stuxnet, a malware believed to have been jointly developed by the United States and Israel, demonstrated the capability to physically damage nuclear infrastructure through cyber means. Similar attacks could potentially compromise nuclear safety or trigger false warnings.

9.5. Regional Rivalries

Regional conflicts involving nuclear-armed states or states with nuclear ambitions pose acute risks. The India-Pakistan rivalry, with both states possessing nuclear weapons and an unresolved territorial dispute over Kashmir, remains one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints. The Middle East faces proliferation risks related to Iran's nuclear programme and Israel's undeclared arsenal. Northeast Asia faces risks from North Korea's nuclear programme and the broader US-China strategic competition.

9.6. Terrorist Acquisition

The potential for non-state actors, particularly terrorist organisations, to acquire nuclear materials or weapons remains a critical concern. While the construction of a nuclear weapon from stolen materials

is technically extremely difficult, the theft or trafficking of fissile material – highly enriched uranium or separated plutonium – represents a credible threat that requires robust international safeguards and security measures.

9.7. Nuclear Sharing

NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements, under which US nuclear weapons are stored in five European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey) and could be delivered by allied aircraft in a conflict, present legal and political challenges. Critics argue that these arrangements violate the NPT's prohibition on the transfer of nuclear weapons. Supporters maintain that the weapons remain under US custody and control at all times.

9.8. Verification Challenges

Effective verification of disarmament commitments requires sophisticated monitoring technologies and robust institutional frameworks. Challenges include verifying the dismantlement of warheads without revealing design secrets, monitoring fissile material production, and ensuring compliance in states with limited transparency. The development of new verification technologies, including satellite-based monitoring and advanced sensors, is critical but requires international cooperation and funding.

9.9. Treaty Withdrawal and Erosion

The collapse of the INF Treaty, the suspension of New START, and the uncertain future of other arms control agreements represent a systematic erosion of the international arms control architecture. Each withdrawal removes constraints on nuclear arsenals, reduces transparency, and increases the potential for miscalculation and arms racing.

10. Country Blocs

Understanding the alliance structures and regional groupings that shape nuclear politics is essential for effective diplomacy in DISEC. The following blocs represent the major alignments that delegates should anticipate.

10.1. NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization comprises 32 member states, including the three European nuclear-armed states (France, the United Kingdom, and the United States through its nuclear umbrella). NATO's nuclear posture is based on extended deterrence – the commitment to defend all allies, including those without nuclear weapons, through the threat of nuclear retaliation. NATO has consistently opposed the TPNW, arguing it is incompatible with the alliance's security architecture. NATO states generally support the NPT framework and advocate for incremental, verifiable disarmament.

NATO Nuclear Posture	Key Features
Nuclear sharing	US weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey
Extended deterrence	Nuclear umbrella for all 32 allies
TPNW position	Opposed; incompatible with NATO strategy
Disarmament stance	Supports NPT; incremental approach

10.2. BRICS

The BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and newer members) includes three nuclear-armed states (Russia, China, India) and one state with significant nuclear energy capabilities (Brazil). BRICS positions on nuclear issues are diverse: Russia and China support the NPT framework while pursuing modernization; India maintains a non-aligned position with No First Use; and Brazil supports disarmament but has not signed the TPNW. BRICS states have historically advocated for a multipolar world order, which influences their approach to nuclear governance.

10.3. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The NAM, comprising 120 member states, has historically been a strong advocate for nuclear disarmament. NAM states, as predominantly non-nuclear countries, have pushed for more aggressive disarmament timelines and greater accountability from nuclear-armed states. Many NAM members have signed the TPNW and view it as a necessary complement to the NPT. The NAM's position emphasises the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the moral imperative of disarmament.

10.4. P5 (Permanent Five)

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom – are the five states recognised as nuclear-weapon states under the NPT. The P5 have issued joint statements on nuclear risk reduction, including the January 2022 statement affirming that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” However, geopolitical tensions have strained P5 cooperation on nuclear issues, and the absence of China and Russia from recent multilateral arms control dialogues has been a significant setback.

10.5. Middle East

The Middle East presents a unique set of nuclear challenges. Iran's nuclear programme remains a source of tension despite the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and subsequent negotiations. Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal and its absence from the NPT create a regional imbalance. The establishment of a Middle East Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (WMDFZ) has been a long-standing objective but remains unrealised due to these complexities.

10.6. Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region encompasses multiple nuclear dynamics: the US-China strategic competition, North Korea's nuclear programme, India's growing arsenal, and the nuclear umbrella extended to Japan, South Korea, and Australia. The AUKUS agreement (Australia, United Kingdom, United States), under which Australia will acquire nuclear-powered submarines, has raised non-proliferation concerns. Regional Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones in the Pacific (the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone / Treaty of Rarotonga) provide important normative frameworks.

11. Possible Solutions

Delegates are encouraged to consider the following approaches, individually or in combination, as potential pathways toward strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and reducing nuclear risks.

11.1. Strengthening the NPT

Proposals for strengthening the NPT include establishing more rigorous compliance mechanisms, creating a dedicated funding mechanism for disarmament activities, and adopting a time-bound framework for nuclear-weapon state disarmament. Some proposals call for a supplementary protocol to the NPT that would establish binding disarmament milestones. Enhanced review processes with mandatory compliance assessments could also strengthen accountability.

11.2. Universal CTBT Ratification

Achieving universal ratification of the CTBT would establish a binding, verifiable prohibition on nuclear testing. Delegates could propose incentives for Annex 2 states to ratify, including security assurances, technical cooperation, or phased implementation arrangements. Entry into force of the CTBT would reinforce the global norm against nuclear testing and limit the ability of states to develop new or advanced nuclear weapon designs.

11.3. Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)

Negotiations for an FMCT, which would prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, have been stalled at the Conference on Disarmament for over two decades. Proposing a renewed framework for FMCT negotiations – perhaps outside the traditional consensus-based forum – could break this deadlock. An FMCT would cap the material available for new nuclear weapons and serve as a building block for future disarmament.

11.4. Confidence-Building Measures

Practical confidence-building measures can reduce the risk of miscalculation and accidental escalation. These include establishing or strengthening nuclear hotlines between nuclear-armed states, exchanging data on nuclear force postures, conducting joint exercises on crisis communication, and implementing pre-notification arrangements for missile tests. The US-Russia Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers, established in 1987, provide a model for such measures.

11.5. Enhanced IAEA Funding and Mandate

Proposing increased funding for the IAEA's safeguards programme, expanded adoption of the Additional Protocol, and enhanced technical capabilities for verification would strengthen the international monitoring architecture. Additional funding could support the development of new verification technologies, including environmental sampling, satellite monitoring, and advanced sensors.

11.6. Regional Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones

Establishing or strengthening Regional Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) is a proven approach to reducing nuclear risks at the regional level. Existing NWFZs cover Latin America and the Caribbean

(Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga), Southeast Asia (Bangkok Treaty), Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba), and Central Asia (Treaty of Semipalatinsk). Proposals for new NWFZs in the Middle East and Northeast Asia would address the world's most acute proliferation flashpoints.

11.7. Missile Transparency

Proposing a multilateral framework for missile test pre-notification, data exchange on missile capabilities, and transparency in missile defence deployments could reduce uncertainty and build confidence. Such a framework could be modelled on the now-defunct INF Treaty's verification provisions or the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

11.8. AI Regulation in Nuclear Contexts

Developing international norms and regulations for the use of artificial intelligence in nuclear command-and-control, early warning, and strategic planning is an emerging priority. Proposals could include a prohibition on fully autonomous nuclear launch systems, mandatory human-in-the-loop requirements for nuclear decision-making, and international standards for AI safety in military applications.

12. Questions a Resolution Must Answer

A successful resolution in DISEC should provide clear, actionable answers to the following questions:

1. How can the NPT be strengthened?

What specific mechanisms – compliance, accountability, timelines – should be adopted to ensure nuclear-armed states fulfil their disarmament obligations?

2. How can new states be discouraged from acquiring nuclear weapons?

What incentives, security guarantees, or diplomatic frameworks can reduce the motivation for proliferation?

3. Should nuclear modernization continue?

Under what conditions, if any, is modernization compatible with the disarmament goals of the NPT?

4. How should AI be regulated in the nuclear domain?

What safeguards, prohibitions, or norms are needed to prevent dangerous AI applications in nuclear command-and-control?

5. How should verification improve?

What technologies, funding mechanisms, and institutional reforms are needed to ensure effective monitoring of compliance?

6. What role should the IAEA play?

Should the IAEA's mandate be expanded? Should its funding be increased? What new capabilities are needed?

7. How can accidental escalation be prevented?

What confidence-building measures, communication channels, and safeguards are most effective?

8. What sanctions are appropriate?

For states that violate non-proliferation norms, what enforcement mechanisms should be employed?

9. Should the TPNW receive wider support?

How can the TPNW and NPT be reconciled or made complementary?

10. How can regional NWFZs be established or strengthened?

What diplomatic processes and security guarantees are needed for new zones?

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – the cornerstone international agreement governing nuclear weapons, opened for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty – adopted 1996, prohibits all nuclear explosive testing; not yet in force
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency – UN-related organisation responsible for promoting peaceful nuclear energy and verifying non-proliferation compliance
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile – a guided ballistic missile with a range exceeding 5,500 km, capable of delivering nuclear warheads across continents
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile – a ballistic missile launched from a submarine, providing a survivable second-strike capability
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle – a single missile carrying multiple warheads, each capable of striking a different target
Nuclear Triad	A nuclear force structure comprising land-based ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers
No First Use (NFU)	A declared policy under which a nuclear-armed state pledges never to be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict
Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)	A strategic doctrine under which neither side initiates a nuclear first strike because the other side can guarantee devastating retaliation
Deterrence	The strategy of preventing an adversary's action through the threat of unacceptable retaliation
Safeguards	Measures applied by the IAEA to verify that states comply with their non-proliferation commitments
Enrichment	The process of increasing the concentration of the fissile isotope uranium-235 in uranium, required for both nuclear energy and weapons
Fissile Material	Material capable of sustaining a nuclear chain reaction; primarily uranium-235 and plutonium-239
Strategic Stability	A condition in which neither side has an incentive to launch a first strike; maintained through mutual vulnerability and credible second-strike capabilities
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – adopted 2017, entered into force 2021; comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty – a proposed treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone – a region in which states have agreed by treaty not to develop, acquire, or host nuclear weapons



START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – bilateral agreements between the US and Russia/Soviet Union limiting strategic nuclear forces
INF Treaty	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty – eliminated ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 km; US withdrew in 2019
Deterrence by Punishment	Deterring attack by threatening devastating retaliation
Deterrence by Denial	Deterring attack by making it unlikely to succeed through robust defences
Extended Deterrence	A security guarantee under which a nuclear-armed state extends its nuclear umbrella to protect non-nuclear allies
Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV)	A maneuverable weapon that travels at hypersonic speeds (above Mach 5) through the atmosphere, difficult to intercept
Additional Protocol	A supplementary agreement to IAEA safeguards that provides expanded inspection rights and information access

14. Further Reading

Delegates are strongly encouraged to consult the following resources for in-depth research on the agenda and related topics.

Resource	URL	Focus Area
United Nations Disarmament	https://www.un.org/disarmament/	UN disarmament framework, resolutions, and reports
DISEC (First Committee)	https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/	Committee documents, resolutions, and agenda items
IAEA	https://www.iaea.org/	Nuclear safeguards, verification, and nuclear energy
SIPRI	https://www.sipri.org/	Arms control data, yearbooks, and policy analysis
ICAN	https://www.icanw.org/	TPNW advocacy, humanitarian impact, and campaign resources
Arms Control Association	https://www.armscontrol.org/	Arms control analysis, treaty tracking, and policy briefs
Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI)	https://www.nti.org/	Nuclear security, biosecurity, and threat reduction
Federation of American Scientists	https://fas.org/	Nuclear weapon status, policy analysis, and FAS Nuclear Notebook
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists	https://thebulletin.org/	Doomsday Clock, risk assessment, and expert commentary
UN Treaty Collection	https://treaties.un.org/	Treaty texts, ratification status, and legal instruments
CSIS Missile Defense Project	https://missiledefense.csis.org/	Missile defence technology, policy, and regional analysis
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	https://www.sipri.org/	Arms transfers, military expenditure, and conflict data

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